

FLETC MANUAL 67-31

Fraternization Between Center Personnel and Students Guide

*SUPPORTING PUBLICATION TO [FLETC DIRECTIVE 67-31](#)
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Fraternization Between Center Personnel and Students

A. The FLETC fraternization policy applies to all students in FLETC-conducted or FLETC-supported training (including Student Interns) and all staff (permanent, detailed, contract, and other agency) who instruct or have direct contact with students. This includes personnel who are in a position to influence the evaluation of students, or whose activities might present an appearance of impropriety reflecting on the FLETC.

B. The public, partner organizations, staff, students, and contractors have the right to expect that decisions, in appearance and actuality, be based upon professionalism and impartiality. Such an environment encourages mutual professional respect as the fundamental basis for relationships at the FLETC and contributes to the continued effective performance of the duties and responsibilities of the FLETC.

C. Fraternization and other inappropriate student, staff, or contractor relationships violate the high standards of integrity and impartiality needed to maintain and assure the effective performance of duties and maintenance of public trust. All Center personnel and students are expected to maintain these high standards of integrity and impartiality.

D. Fraternization and personal relationships between students, staff, and contractors are inappropriate and prohibited when they:

1. Involve or create the appearance of preferential treatment or the improper use of the relationship for personal gain or gratification;
2. Involve abuse of an employee's official position;
3. Adversely affect the morale or the effective performance of duties and responsibilities related to the FLETC;
4. Denigrate the credibility of the student evaluation system;
5. Reflect badly upon the FLETC; or
6. Are manifested in the work environment in a manner that is disruptive to the effective conduct of training.

E. GUIDELINES FOR ASSESSING THE PROPRIETY OF A RELATIONSHIP.

1. There are many variations of appropriate and inappropriate

personal relationships between students and staff. No policy document could provide an exhaustive listing of what relationships and conduct are appropriate as opposed to inappropriate. The exercise of sound judgment by all persons covered by this directive, relative to the principles outlined in this section, is required in order both to avoid injury to the FLETC and to allow the FLETC to achieve its mission. Exercising sound judgment in assessing the existence of an inappropriate relationship is also important to fostering professional student/staff relationships.

2. Inappropriate personal relationships may involve any combination of staff members and students, regardless of grade or gender. Factors to be considered when assessing the propriety of any student/staff relationship include, but are not limited to:

- a. Does one individual exercise authority over the other;
- b. Does one individual have the capability of influencing evaluations, assignments, benefits, or privileges of the other; and
- c. What is the nature of the personal relationship between the individuals, including actual or perceived impact on training and others in training?

3. Below is a partial listing of relationships and conduct involving staff and students that are likely to be inappropriate. Many are also prohibited by the Standards of Ethical Conduct for Employees of the Executive Branch, 5 C.F.R. 2635:

- a. Excessive and/or frequent socializing;
- b. Going into private business together;
- c. Lending or borrowing money for profit or benefit of any kind;
- d. Giving or receiving gifts except as otherwise authorized under the Standards of Ethical Conduct;
- e. Dating, cohabitation or sexual intimacy;
- f. Intimate communication involving romantic or sexual overtones; and
- g. Any training or work-related change based on favoritism or otherwise not based on legitimate training considerations, i.e., changing duty rosters or work schedules or team assignments to the benefit of one or more

members involved in a personal relationship when others are not afforded the same consideration.

F. RESPONSIBILITIES.

1. All personnel at the Center are responsible for maintaining high standards of integrity, impartiality, and conduct to assure effective performance of the duties and responsibilities of the Center and maintenance of public trust. Fraternization and other inappropriate student/staff relationships violate those standards. All incidents of fraternization or other inappropriate student/staff relationships must be reported to the Director through the applicable supervisory chain. The Director will ensure that the matter is referred to the Special Investigations and Security Division (SISD), FLETC, or the Office of Inspector General (OIG), Treasury, as appropriate. If the allegation involves employees of a partner organization, the agency representative will be notified. In those cases where the SISD recuses itself, or the OIG declines to assert jurisdiction, the Director, after considering the facts and circumstances of the case, will, if necessary, order additional fact finding and ultimately refer the matter to an appropriate supervisory level for corrective action and/or resolution.

2. Every supervisor, manager, and employee is responsible for ensuring that all employees and students know the FLETC policy regarding fraternization and inappropriate student/staff relationships, and that they also understand its application. Supervisors and managers are further responsible for taking appropriate administrative and/or disciplinary action upon determining that any student/staff relationship is contrary to the provisions of this directive.

3. Persons involved in or contemplating student/staff relationships, which could be considered inappropriate, are strongly encouraged to seek counseling from their supervisory chain to resolve any potential conflict with this policy as quickly as possible. Personnel must, however, recognize their responsibility to avoid inappropriate student/staff relationships and be aware that the cessation or deferral of a personal relationship frequently will be the appropriate way to resolve a conflict with this policy. If a covered relationship appears to be developing between a staff member and a student, the individuals must defer any personal relationship until after the student completes his or her training and departs from the Center.

G. REPORTING

1. All incidents of inappropriate fraternization will be

reported to the appropriate officials (Supervisors/Program Managers/Program Specialists/Class Coordinators) as soon as possible for referral and corrective action/resolution. Any person notified of allegations of inappropriate fraternization must then report the allegation through the appropriate supervisory chain in conformance with the requirements of Section F, paragraph 1, above.

2. Failure to report inappropriate fraternization by supervisors, managers or coworkers who are aware of it constitutes grounds for discipline, as appropriate.